

## LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1 (currently amended): Hot rolled steel sheet excellent in chemical convertibility free from bald spots ~~produced through a hot rolling and pickling step characterized by the steel sheet containing~~, by mass%,

C: 0.03 to 0.15%, Si: 0.8 to 3.0%,

Mn: 0.5 to 3.0%, P: 0.07% or less,

S: 0.01% or less, Al: 0.015 to 0.1%,

N: 0.001 to 0.008%,

the steel sheet optionally containing one or more of the Ti: 0.02 to 0.3%, Nb: 0.01 to 0.5%, Ni 0.1 to 2.0%, B: 0.0002 to 0.006% and Ca: 0.0005 to 0.005%; and

the steel sheet being free from the containing Cu and Mo, and the balance of Fe and unavoidable impurities, the oxides on the steel sheet surface having, by mass%, an Si concentration of 3.5% or less and an Mn concentration of 3.5% or less, and

an average roughness Ra of the steel sheet surface is 3.0  $\mu\text{m}$  or less and a number of pittings of a diameter of 1  $\mu\text{m}$  to 0.3  $\mu\text{m}$  ~~due to the pickling~~ is an average 5 or less in squares of the steel sheet surface when dividing it into squares of 10  $\mu\text{m}$  per side,

the steel sheet obtained by pickling by dipping the steel sheet in an aqueous solution containing a  $\text{HNO}_3$  concentration of 0.5 to 5 mass % and a  $\text{HCl}$  concentration of 7 to 15 mass %, an Fe ion concentration of 4 to 12% and a balance of metal ions other than Fe and impurities, at a solution temperature of 80 to 98°C for 40 sec or more to when the  $\text{HCl}$  concentration (mass %) x dipping time (sec) becomes 520 or less.

Claims 2 to 8: (canceled)